PIGEON FLYING ON THE ROOFS.

A SPORT PURSUED ON EAST SIDE TENEMENT ROOFS.

To Control a Flight of Pigeons an Art in Itself—Contests Between Rival Owners—Peculiarities of the Breed—Fascinations of the Art of Flight Flying.

Flight flying of pigeons begins now as a rooftop sport in New York and is kept up until the snow flurries blind the birds in November and make the feathers wet and heavy. It is a sport of the tenements, especially on the East Side.

A good flight pigeon will never alight save on a roof. Should one be so degenerate as to fly to the street, off goes its head and the next stop is in the pot. The flight fanciers are so keen in preserving the high flyers pure that they will not sell a fraud, as they call a bird that will light on the ground, to the neighborhood bird store, although such shops serve as clearing houses for their wagers as well as places of barter. A bird with white showing in its tail, save the occasional all white birds, is also called a fraud.

The wagers and much of the bartering are consequent on a game played by the housetop fanciers, in which the trained flocks are the cards and stray flight birds the prizes. The strays, when caught, are held as forfeits, to be redeemed by the owner, and as the captor and owner seldom come to an agreement over the money value of the prize the bird store dealer is accepted as the referee.

The game is a side recreation of the flights, the real fascination being in flying the flocks under control. It gives a pleasure unique in its way to the fancier—often a cobbler who pokes away at the bench or a bushelman who stitches on coats and who gets his only taste of fresh air in tending his loft—to watch the flight mount upward in corkscrew curves from the tenement roof, high above steeples, skyscrapers and the city's confusion of sights and smells, until the birds become almost invisible flecks of color among the clouds, and then to summon down the flock by signs and calls to cluster at his feet. There is a sense of power in this control of the birds of the air by the toiler of the tenement that is uplifting in itself, aside from the other pleasures of the flights.

To learn to control a flight entails long study, and, as in the wiles of woodcraft in luring turkeys or calling moose, there are some who have an especial aptitude for the work and control the pigeons much more effectively than others. These are generally the gray haired veterans of the pigeon fanciers, but often a boy in knickerbockers will do as well with his birds.

The flight fanciers say that their birds are really the most intelligent of all pigeons, equal to the homers in attachment to the loft and the instinct to return to it, with the pertness and spaniel-like appreciation of petting peculiar to the pouters and fantails. They are an old breed in Europe, but not recognized in the American breeds and wholly overlooked by the fanciers, except those devoted to the special cult. There was a class for them, under the title of Highflyers, for the first time at the poultry and pigeon show in Madison Square Garden last winter, but the half dozen on view were not very good ones as to looks.

In Europe the flights are called the Hanoverian, or "blau bunte." It is a city bird, a pigeon bred on the housetops for generations until the instinct to descend to the ground has been entirely eliminated. Flight is the name for the breed in this city and the generic term for the flocks and the sport of flying them.

"Have you any flights?" is the question of the loft keeper at the bird store.

The dealer will show the inquirer to the big cage kept for such stock, and the inquirer will run his eye over the birds.

"Hello!" will be the exclamation, in tones of surprise. "You have some good young birds; there is a dun that I owned and sold to Hans three years ago; a blue that Ricardo had last month, and, would you believe it, there is my yellow flight. I wonder how it got here?"

"Why, Billy brought in that yellow hen as a stray yesterday. You can have it back for $3. You might have had it from him yesterday for 50 cents, and you know it."

Then a barter begins and the owner will have to pay the forfeit to get back his flight. The preamble to this little comedy has been the winning away of the yellow flight by Billy's birds. Billy scooped it in as a stray, and, after he and the owner had failed to come to terms, the flight had been left at the neighborhood bird shop on sale.

It is wonderful how the flight men know their birds and also those of the flights near by. A flight flyer will often identify at a shop a stray he lost four or five years before.

The flocks are usually kept confined in coops on the roofs, except when the fancier comes to enjoy a flight. The flights, which vary in duration according to the weather, from thirty minutes to three or four hours, are usually in the early morning or late afternoon. Flights owned near by are flown at different times, the owners meantime chaffing when they meet about which one would be the loser should the two flocks collide in midair, and on a certain day the talk ends in an aerial duel of feathers.

The loser on the last occasion of such a trial has been strengthening up his flight, and when the time comes to try again he waits until the rival flock is up and then loosens his own flock. The flocks circle high aloft, each flight minding its business and clinging together like a V-shaped flock of wild geese until, as the circles grow greater, the inevitable blending or it may be a head-on collision of the two companies occurs.

It is an anxious moment to the rival fanciers, watching with eager eyes from the roofs far below, and to their friends of the fancy who watch from other coigns of vantage. The mix-up of flocks is over as quickly as persons pass each other in the street. The flights keep on in separate flocks, seemingly as compact as before, and the owners call down their birds.

As the flight settles on his roof, each owner has noted whether his string has been agumented or depleted. In the former case he has been a winner, provided he catches the stray bird or birds.

This is done by scooping in the stray with a long handled net, the head usually of mosquito netting stretched over a barrel hoop, the bird meanwhile being beguiled with handfuls of dainty food. There is a great knack in netting the birds. A novice may learn how difficult it is by attempting the easier task of catching a street pigeon in a crab net. Each flight fancier has his own mixture of food to aid in decoying the strays.

If the attempt is a failure, the bird will fly off to its own flock or loft. If it succeeds the two owners will bicker and disagree over the value of the stray, with the usual ending that the bird is sent by the finder to the bird store as a clearing house for its redemption. The owners will always, in the long run, buy back their birds, for one reason because a breeding pair has been broken up and there will be little harmony in the flight while it contains an unmated bird.

"The East Siders begin as flight fanciers as little boys usually. Formerly they were mostly Germans or German-Americans, but now the boys and men of all nationalities represented on the East Side are to be found among the flight fanciers," to quote the old time keeper of an East Side bird store. "But once acquired, the taste for high flyers never dies out; it is the most absorbing, and I believe gives the most pleasure in return, of any form of pigeon keeping.

"The boys keep their flights until they are old men and have boys of their own. Some have dealt with me for thirty years and have become wealthy, or very well to do, and have flights of 150 birds. They may have begun as boys with two or four pigeons.

"The ordinary flight will be from thirty to fifty birds. The flight pigeons sell from 50 cents apiece upward. I have known $15 to be paid for one bird, but the highest price I ever received was $9 for one. It was forfeit money, too, and the man who had caught the stray wanted more."

It is not easy for a stranger to gain admittance to one of the flight lofts, for one reason because the owners are always on the watch for detectives from the Board of Health, which has a habit of raiding the roof lofts. If kept under sanitary conditions and no complaints are received from the other dwellers in the tenement the Health Department is not apt to make very frequent raids. If raided the fancier frees his birds and moves his coops to a nearby roof, in the endeavor to recatch the flight after the raid.

The highflyers seldom bring in strays except of their own breed, which makes possible the sporting side of flight flying. Street pigeons and fancy birds do not mount high enough to mix in with the flights. Should a tagged homing bird be found as a stray the fancier does not retain it; instead, after feeding the carrier pigeon, the flight fancier starts it off again on its aerial journey.

On the perch the flight birds have a somewhat heavy and blocky appearance, which is due to their depth of chest and large wing muscles.

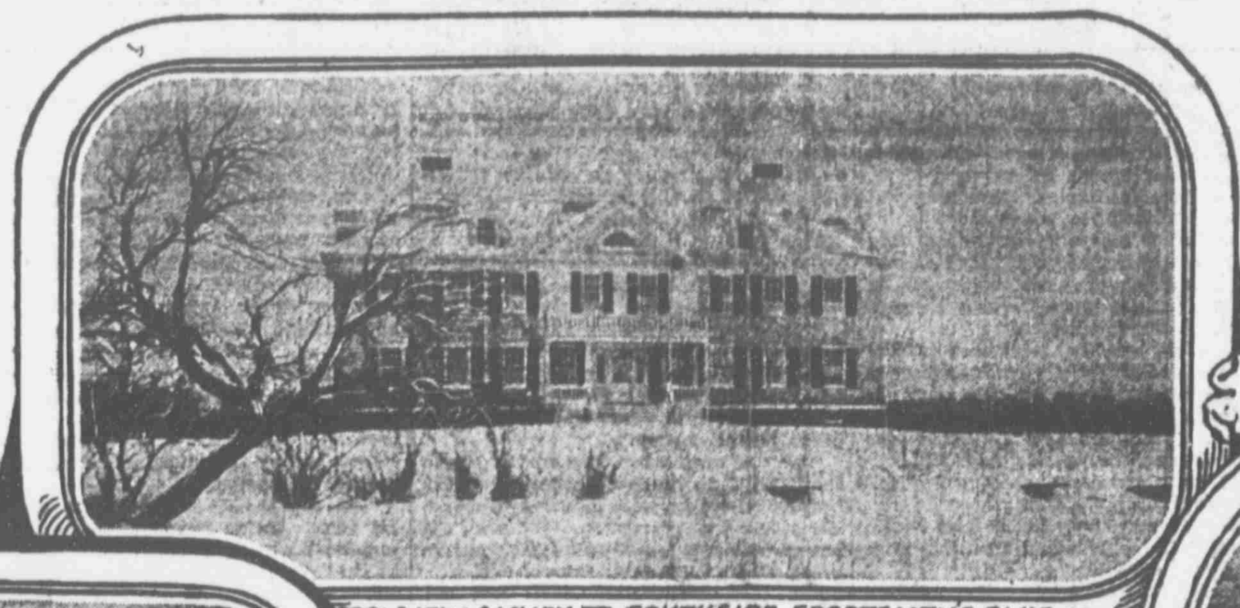
The body color must be solid from head to tail and may be of any shade. Seven flight feathers on each wing, neither more nor less, must be white; the bill must be a clean cream white, without a speck of black, and the eye of the blueblooded Hanoverian is a glistening pearl in color and brightness.

TROUT FISHING CLUBS OF LONG ISLAND

Lucky Members Who May Expect Good Sport on April 1

April 1 will be the first day for trout fishing this season on Long Island under the new law that sets the opening for the day after the last Friday in March. Formerly the season opened on March 29, and the change was made to avoid a conflict with the Sunday law in the years when March 29 came on Sunday.

However uncertain the prospect for catches on the public trout streams, there will be no disappointment this year for the members of clubs that have trout preserves. All followers of the sport know of the delectable lands inhabited by the clubmen, but few have ever fished on the private waters. The clubs are not only few in number and of limited membership, but they are also vigorous in their edicts against an invasion of guests, so that to the great majority it is as difficult to fish on the preserves as to enter Lhasa, the sealed city of Tibet.



NEW ANNEX TO SOUTHSIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB.

WHIPPING THE UPPER POND FOR TROUT.

OLD MILL ON MAIN POND.

There are only four members in the Rassapeague Club, which maintains a game preserve of 100 acres at Smithtown that includes a string of some sixteen ponds and part of the Nissequogue River. They are O. H. Payne, H. O. Havemeyer, Grant B. Schley and H. L. Terrell. The club does not own a hatchery and now relies only on the natural supply of trout. The ponds and streams were stocked some years ago, but disease killed off the trout, and since then no effort has been made to replenish the supply by artificial means.

The oldest of the clubs, the South Side Sportsmen's Club of Oakdale, is limited to 100 members. This is not only the pioneer of Long Island game clubs, but also one of the oldest in the country and it has been the model for similar organizations, North and South. The Olympic Club of Bayshore which dates to 1840, is older, but it is now a cottage colony and yacht haven rather than a sporting club.

Few outsiders have any conception of the fine fishing enjoyed by the members of this club. The catch is limited to eighteen brook trout a day, yet the figures of the aggregate catch each season attain a surprising total.

The club has the detailed records back to 1876. The upper brook has only been fished since 1883 and the catch there from that year has been about 10 per cent. of the gross catch. This is the record of trout taken, exclusive of 1904, which was up to the average, but the figures for which are not available:

Year.	Totals.	Wt. lbs.	Year.	Totals.	Wt. lbs.
1876	896	266	1890	7,510	3,008
1877	1,156	396	1891	5,862	2,791
1878	1,967	1,043	1892	6,466	3,768
1879	3,140	1,588	1893	11,952	4,567
1880	3,002	1,567	1894	10,304	4,950
1881	4,028	1,809	1895	10,579	3,708
1882	3,381	1,678	1896	16,365	6,608
1883	5,767	2,562	1897	15,508	6,729
1884	5,892	2,494	1898	12,610	6,186
1885	7,782	2,678	1899	12,958	7,164
1886	5,889	2,493	1900	11,715	4,793
1887	5,477	2,520	1901	12,556	5,602
1888	6,270	2,960	1902	11,874	4,940
1889	5,824	2,624	1903	11,732	4,810

As at the Tuxedo Club, the South Side Sportsmen's Club has an extensive fish hatchery. The club sets aside 120,000 yearling trout each season for its own use and any surplus is sold to other clubs, the reserved lot being turned into the preserves as three-year-olds. There are 1,000,000 eggs now being hatched.

The heavy snows of this winter have swollen the water in the ponds and brooks, and the trout have had an unusually plentiful supply of natural food, so that they are in lusty condition and should furnish the best of sport from the opening day onward. All fish under six inches in length must be returned to the water. Fly fishing is practically imperative, although on and after the second Saturday in May bait fishing is allowed in the waters below the East Pond and in the waters south of the New Bridge road.

The preserves, which are famous as a sanctuary for Long Island deer as well as for the trout fishing, include a stretch of country comprising about 3,500 acres between the lines of the Montauk and the main division of the Long Island Railroad at Oakdale. The Connetguot Brook, which empties into Great River and connects the three chief ponds with the smaller Slade Pond and brooks, furnishes the fishing waters.

The club keeps two boats at the Hatchery Dam for use between the Hatchery and the sign at the head of Deep Water, two boats on the East Pond, two boats on the West Brook or Cutting Pond, two boats on the Lower Brook, one boat on Slade Pond; two boats on Lower Pond, nine boats at the flume for use on Great River, and other boats on the Main Pond. Boatmen employed by the club accompany the members on the fishing trips.

The brook is divided into five sections, and when more than one member wishes to fish the sections are drawn for by lot for the morning or afternoon fishing. The privilege of the upper brook fishing is limited as to each member to two days of each week.

Only members may visit the club from the opening of the fishing to the last Saturday of April. Then, until May 15, male guests over 25 may have the privileges of the club when accompanied by the member introducing them, but thereafter, which is a further boon of membership, to the first of November each year the privileges are extended to the guests and the families of the members.

The main clubhouse is a picturesque and rambling structure, and it is then a general country house for the residents. The annex, a modern Colonial building, is at all times reserved as a bachelors' hall. On either side of the hall of the old clubhouse are racks holding the light rods of the members, ready for use and often with the flies used for the last cast. Above each rod is the card of the owner, a directory that holds many names famous in the annals of amateur sport.

The incorporators of the club, in 1866, were men of prowess in their time at angling and in many affairs of life. They were Bradish Johnson, John E. Develin, John A. Griswold, John K. Hackett, George G. Barnard, William C. Barrett, Edward H. Arthur, Shepard F. Knapp, George G. Wilmerding, Preston H. Hodges, Jones Rogers and Charles L. Tiffany, who became a body corporate "for the protection, increase and capture of salmon, trout and game." Mr. Rogers was the president until 1868, Mr. Hackett from that time until 1879, James Benkard to 1883, Roland Redmond to 1894, and George P. Slade has held the office since 1895.

There is always a long waiting list, although the initiation fee is $250 and the annual dues $200. Moreover, each member must own a share of the stock. The par value is $500, but the real value is about $2,000, and no member may own more than one share. The value is kept as low as possible, for, to quote a member, "the club does not want to keep out good fellows."

In the early fishing, which is true also of other preserved water on Long Island, the trout will rise quickly to almost any artificial fly that is cast with deftness. But later on when the days get warmer and the natural flies begin to hover over the water the best success is with lures that counterfeit closely those the trout are feeding on.

Each member has his favorites, but they are store tried flies, even if of a special device, for fly tying is now a lost art with the anglers, at least of the clubs. The lightest of split bamboo is the favorite rod, but all sorts of material, if of the proper wandlike lightness, even to steel, appears in the rods.

Long Island gentleman farmers, as they are known to the community with whom farming is no merry jest, form the backbone of each club's membership. The South Side Sportsmen's has been dubbed the millionaires' club, but it has no monopoly of the anglers who may put a numeral and six ciphers, or more, on any bond they stand for.

W. Bayard Cutting and W. K. Vanderbilt, whose estates adjoin the club grounds, are members of the South Side Sportsmen's, and others of conspicuous wealth on the roll include George P. Wetmore, Howard Willetts, Frank Work, H. McK. Twombly, Richard T. Wilson, Jr., F. W. Rhinelander, J. R. Roosevelt, H. K. Knapp, J. H. Hyde, H. B. Hollins, H. H. Hollister, Julien T. Davies, Charles R. Flint and F. G. Bourne. August Belmont has been a member since May, 1900, while Andrew Carnegie became a member a month earlier.

The two clubs named, with the Long Island Country Club, are the only ones of great prominence for their trout preserves on Long Island. The latter club has a large tract, with many ponds and brooks, at Eastport.

The Carman's River Club is small and thriving, with a fine stretch of natural fishing on the river, and there is a club renowned for sport and social reunions on the North Shore, the Mill Neck Club. There are thirty members, the shares costing $1,000 each. The club owns 100 acres, which include Francis's ponds and brooks.

Two clubs, the Nissequogue and the Wyandauch, have stretches on the Nissequogue River, as well as the Rassapeague Club. The Wyandauch Club also has the fishing rights in Stump Pond and its tributaries. There is also a club at Northport, and at Brookhaven is one of the oldest clubs on Long Island, the Suffolk, which possesses both stream and pond fishing. H. L. von Meyer is president, and the club is a small and exclusive one.

The natural fish only are preserved at the Suffolk Club, but the fingerlings caught are saved and placed in a small pond to attain a good size before they are again returned to the fishing waters.

There are many preserves on private grounds, and the fishing in some cases is controlled by two or three men who are in partnership, but who do not take a club name, though really the nucleus of such an organization. The preserves are mostly on the South Shore of Long Island and they are not regarded with disfavor by the anglers who are barred out. In this country the fishing rights go with the land and no one objects to the principle.

In one way the preserves improve the fishing in public waters. The trout of the South Side resemble salmon in one respect—their habit of running out of the fresh water into salt water. All of the brooks flow into the South Bay—for instance, Great River, Carman's River and Patchogue River are fed by trout brooks—and trout raised on the preserves are caught on the public stretches there. Doubtless, after following the brackish water of the ebb tides into the bay, they often run back to other creeks and brooks that are free for all to fish in.

So the anglers of the public streams have no quarrel with the club members, for while they may envy them, they concede that the stocking of the private brooks helps the fishing in the open waters. It is a wise angler who knows where the big fish he has caught was hatched, and with wisdom comes silence.

There is more care needed in the choice of flies for the native trout than when the angler has only to lure the ravenous and eager trout in the artificially propagated ponds. For the early spring fishing many are being tied with silver bodies, and the black gnat, coachman, Cahill and Montreal are made more attractive by tips of junglecock feather over the wings.

The limit in lightness has been reached in the new split bamboo rods, which all complete weigh only two or three ounces. With such a rod and a line as dainty as spider webbing, the clubman has to play a 6 inch trout as carefully as though it were a salmon.

Trout fishing will begin in Monroe and Livingston counties on March 29 and in Orange county on April 1. In the brooks in Gilboa and Conesville, Schoharie county; White Creek in the town of Hoosick and White Creek in Rensselaer and Washington counties and in Saratoga county, the season does not open until May 1. There is no fishing at any time in Erie county. Otherwise trout fishing throughout the State begins on April 16. The law is up, without exception, on Aug. 31.

BLIND WHEN THE SUN SET.

TRAGEDY OF A SHANTY IN THE CANADIAN FOREST.

Four Men, Stricken With Night Blindness, Find a Fourth Frozen to Death—Story of His Fate as It Was Read by the Lumbermen—A Mystery of the Woods.

LACHINE, Canada, March 25.—Night blindness is an ailment prevalent among lumbermen who work in shanties remote enough to make vegetables an unusual luxury. In most instances the persons affected have the normal use of their eyesight from sunrise to sunset, but are stone blind when the sun is below the horizon.

Sometimes the trouble comes on slowly, beginning with a dimness of vision at morning and evening, and increasing until it is impossible for the patient to stir outside except when the sun is high. At other times, and especially in the bright days of March, when the glare of the sun upon the snow is trying to all eyes, night blindness sets in suddenly.

There was a curious case of this sudden coming on of the blindness in the Ottowa lumber district, near Beaver Lake. Four men had been detailed to mark the logs laid upon the ice, and they had worked three or four days in the glaring light of the March sun reflected from the clear lake surface with no particularly bad results. Two of them were sufferers from night blindness, and had to be led home at night by their comrades, and as their shanty was four miles away from the lake it was their custom to start back a little before sundown.

One day they had about finished the job and worked rather late to complete it. To their dismay they found when they stopped work and slipped on their coats that all four were completely blind.

The night was terribly cold, and there was more than half a gale of north wind blowing across the lake. To attempt to grope their way home would be to risk their lives. Happily one of the men remembered that one of the great timbers used as a skidway was a stick of white birch, the canoe tree of the Indians.

Cautiously they felt their way to this log and contrived to tear away a section of the paper like bark. Hastily rolling this up into what would answer for a torch, they lit it with a match and derived light enough for three of the four to be able to distinguish their surroundings.

The birch pole was at once completely stripped of its bark, and while at this work they decided that it would be almost madness to try to reach their own shanty that night, along the narrow pathway their footsteps had made in the deep snow. Right across an arm of the lake on a projecting point was a deserted shanty, and thither they determined to go.

The journey was difficult, as even with the flaming bark to guide them the poor fellows found it difficult to steer a straight course. It was probably near midnight when they pushed open the rude wooden hinged door and entered the shanty.

A fire was quickly started in the caboose with some of the poles taken from the bottom of one of the shelflike sleeping bunks, still in position all around the walls. After a time their sense of seeing came back to them as they sat about the bright fire, and they could look about their new home with tolerable clearness. As their vision cleared they made out the figure of a man seated at the clerk's desk in the corner, with a fine hound at his feet.

A little investigation showed that both man and dog were stone dead and frozen to stiffness. It was evident that the shanty had been the home of the dead pair for a considerable time.

The greater part of a fine deer hung in the cook's lean-to, which was entered by a door from the rear of the shanty. No trace of flour or other provisions was to be seen.

The visitors had been prodigal in their use of matches and now discovered that they had used the last of their supply. Their keenest search of the clothing and stores of the dead man failed to discover a single one, and, though they found a fine rifle in good order in the bunk wherein the bed had been made, not a single cartridge wherewith a flame might be obtained could be found. They at once piled all available fuel near their fire and determined to watch beside it all night.

The dead man was dressed in city clothes, some brown checked material, well made, and he had a good gold watch. On the table were old newspapers of six or eight months ago, all from the United States. A lead pencil lay near the hand of the dead man, and a bit of white birch bark, on which was written over and over again: "Blind!" "Blind!"

Naturally enough, the four men did not care to make a very close search for means of identification. They concluded that the man was a stranger in the woods and an American. It is their opinion that the man was afflicted with night blindness while in the shanty, and became afraid to go far away from it for fear of being overtaken by evening and becoming unable to find his way back again. His matches were used up, and his rifle cartridges having disappeared it was impossible for him to make a fire to keep himself warm or to cook his meat. With the thermometer ranging from 15 to 30 below zero, it would not be long before the frost would claim both him and his faithful hound as victims when without fire or provisions.

When morning came the shantymen made a breakfast of the venison in the lean-to and then started for their own shanty to tell their story to their fellows. The foreman and a couple of others at once set out with one of the four to bury the dead man in the shanty, but arrived at the lakeside to find the building in flames, which soon made total destruction of it and its contents.

Probably it will never be known who the unfortunate man was whose body was discovered that night by the temporarily blinded men. Somehow the impression has declared itself among the lumberers that he was a fugitive from justice who tried to hide himself in the woods. A hunter would have had a guide with him. Had he been used to the woods, he would have known how to keep up his fire and would have had proper supplies.

Maine Woman's Winter in the Woods.

From the Kennebec Journal.

Moose River can boast of one of the brightest, smartest and most enterprising young women in the State

Her father cuts wood for sale, and all through the long cold winter just past she has worked in the woods with him cutting and sawing wood and has done good work. Her physician advised out of door exercise for the benefit of her health, and she has had the good sense to follow his instructions in a sensible way.

A MOOSE TRAIL TO CANADA.

May Explain the Fate of Dr. Seward Webb's Missing Adirondack Herd.

BARNEVALD, N. Y., March 25.—I. A. Vosburg of Saranac Lake, one of the State fish and game wardens, describes a runway for moose which leads out of the North Woods into the valley of the St. Lawrence. He is of the opinion that this is the runway over which the Adirondack moose have made their escape. As proof of this he calls attention to the fact that one moose was killed and another moose was seen on the runway near the Canadian border.

The runway is described as a heavy track, wide and well travelled. It makes its appearance with unmistakable clearness in the town of Brandon, Franklin county, and leads thence through the towns of Malone and Bangor and on to Westville and Fort Covington. The last point is about one mile south of the Canadian line.

According to old hunters this path was used by the native moose, who swam the St. Lawrence River on their retreat to the Canadian woods. During a period of twenty years after the disappearance of the original stock this runway was deserted. Then when moose were restored to the Adirondacks the big animals sought it out and refreshed it as it appears today.

"It was a dozen years ago," says Byron E. Cool of Horse Shoe, N. Y., "that Dr. W. Seward Webb established his 8,000 acre enclosure and liberated in it twenty-two moose and sixty-eight elk, making ninety head of both in his yard. When I took charge three years ago I found one moose and six cow elk left.

"What had become of the others no one seemed to know. The doctor's people had killed only three. These three had become so ugly that it was thought best to kill them.

"The seven head remained in the enclosure until the great forest fire destroyed the fence and they were driven by the flames to a small piece of green woods, and after the fire they made their way to a spot where there was enough green stuff to keep them alive. The elk were killed finally by the railroad, and the one lone moose, no doubt, is the one referred to as the moose with one antler who tried to make his home in the Long Lake region.

"Here, in Dr. Webb's park, was a yard of nearly 100 acres of virgin forest for each head to range upon also men to see that they were not molested. Here, where King Moose had high and low ground to feed upon, he did not thrive.

"Would it not be as well for the State to spend the moose money for the welfare and protection of deer and small game as to try to reestablish these larger animals, which make it dangerous in September and October for any one to go into the woods unarmed?

"It is true that the cow elk will become docile enough to come up to the door for something to eat, to come in and help herself, but her mate is different. For instance, one old fellow in the Webb park chased the keeper's family into the house, and was not content until he had torn down the piazza and left the roof of it on the ground."

STORIES OF BIRD LIFE.

Blackbirds in Flight.

From the Kansas City Journal.

Last Wednesday army after army of blackbirds flew over Aline, headed north. The advance guard was about a half mile long and flying in lines of files reaching from the Rock Island to the Orient track.

The second flew in column formation and was fully three-quarters of a mile long. At intervals of from fifteen minutes to an hour all through the fornoon patches and squares of birds followed. A conservative estimate of the number that passed during the forenoon would be 500,000. The birds flew very low and their wings and chattering could be heard at a great distance.

Kiwi, Oldest of Birds.

From the Chicago Chronicle.

In New Zealand is found the kiwi, a strange bird of the ostrich family. Ostriches have two toes, but the extinct moas had three toes, so also have the existing emus, cassowaries and rheas or South American ostrich.

The kiwi, however, differs from the other struthious birds in having four toes. Further, the kiwi cannot be said to be quite ostrichlike, for in size it is not larger than the ordinary barnyard fowl. It has a small head, with a large and muscular neck and a long, slender bill, with the distinguishing feature that the nostrils are placed close to its tip. The legs are short, but the muscles on the thighs are well developed, and the feet are strong and powerful and provided with sharp claws.

The kiwi is a bird devoid of any external trace of wings, and there is no trace of tail visible, while it is covered with long, narrow, hairlike feathers, and on the fore part of the head and sides of the face are straggling hairlike feelers.

Hawk, Fox and Man Claim Quail.

Avalon correspondence Los Angeles Times.

Dr. William Rowland of Pasadena, who was up at Middle Ranch quail shooting a few days prior to the close of the season, had a most unique experience.

He ran upon a covey of quail and, flushing them, dropped one with his left barrel, and then, at considerable of an angle, dropped another with the right barrel. Turning to his first bird he was just in time to see a fox snatch it up and start to run way with it. Quickly pumping another cartridge into his gun, he let the fox have it, knocking him stiff. After reconnoitring a minute and finding his first bird, he was returning to pick up the second, when something shot down like an arrow from the skies in front of him, the object proving to be an osprey.

The quail had been wounded, and its fluttering attracted the attention of the big hawk, which while sailing through the ether had an eye out for a quail dinner, and darting upon the wounded bird, was about to cheat the hunter out of his quarry. Dr. Rowland, while amazed at the turn of events, did not propose to stand for such a play, and, training his ready gun on the bold robber, with a pull of the trigger put him out of commission, and saved both his birds.

Snowbirds From Arctic Regions.

Hazleton correspondence Philadelphia Record.

Hunters and sportsmen here have been considerably exercised for the last few days owing to the appearance of strange flocks of birds. To-day a flock of seventy-five passed over this city in a northerly direction.

Game Warden James Maloy, who is a specialist on birds, when asked, pronounced them a species of Arctic snowbirds, which never migrate to this section unless in extreme cold weather. They are snow white, and very pretty warblers.

Song Birds of England.

W. D. Howells, in Harper's Magazine.

I doubt if any American city, great or small, has the same number of birds, dear to poetry, singing in early March as Plymouth has.

That morning as we walked in the town, and that afternoon as we rode on our tramtop into the country, they started from a thousand lovely lines of verse, finches and real larks and real robins and many a goldenbilled blackbird, and piped us on our way. Overhead, in the veiled sun, circled and swam the ever cawing rooks, as they jarred in the anxieties of the nesting then urgent upon them.

They were no better than our birds; I will never own such a recreant thing. If I do not quite prefer a crow to a rook, I am free to say that one oriole, or redbird, or hermit thrush is worth all the English birds that ever sang. Only, the English birds sing with greater authority, and find an echo in the mysterious depths of our ancestral past where they and we were compatriots.

Enthusiastic Bird Architect.

From the London Express.

The process of the building of a bird's nest is always interesting, and the most wonderful of all nests, those of the weaver birds, can always be seen in the making by any one who will buy a few males of the African red billed weaver, which cost about half a crown each.

This is a little bird much like a small hen sparrow with a bright red bill, and decked in the breeding season with a pink cap and breast and a black mask. He is an enthusiastic architect, and in France is always sold as *travailleur*—the worker.

Even in the cage he will weave any fibrous material in and out of the wires till they are covered, and in an aviary he will construct beautiful round nests with the greatest enthusiasm, pausing occasionally to swear at fellow craftsmen who presume to criticise his efforts or cast a larcenous eye on his materials.

When Robins Come to New England.

From the Boston Herald.

Do you know that the date on which the robins are due has passed? A friend of mine who has for years kept record of their coming says that the day on which they should appear is the 12th, and that the years which they do not come at that time are the exceptions.

Occasionally they are a day or two earlier, oftener they are a trifle later, but nearly always the 12th sees them in New England. Last year it was very late in the month before they came, and as yet no one has seen or heard them this year. But if other things may be trusted, such as the pussy willows, the bluejays, the golden pheasants, spring and the robins shouldn't be far away.

ADVENTURES WITH LIONS.

The Big Beasts Are Frequently Encountered by Man in South Africa.

News is to hand from two independent sources, says *South Africa*, of an extraordinary adventure that recently befell Mr. Dickert, a farmer living some 15 miles from Malindi Siding, on the Wankies line. Mr. Dickert went to bed at 10 o'clock, and was just going to sleep when he heard what he thought was a pig grunting and sniffing outside the door. He got up and stepped outside to call his dogs, when he was seized by a lion. He shouted, and Mrs. Dickert ran out with a rifle, with which she hit the animal on the head, causing it to loose its hold.

Mr. Dickert immediately snatched at the rifle and fired, point blank, fortunately killing the lion at the first shot. The whole affair was over in a few seconds, and occurred close to the bedroom door, where the hungry animal had evidently been waiting. Mr. Dickert was badly scratched and had his arm lacerated where the lion seized him. Though sufficiently serious at the time, he now looks upon the adventure as one of the most novel of his experiences.

The people at Malindi Siding have been annoyed by a lion that developed the habit of coming right up to the station and was heard in the neighborhood of the railway men's houses. A short time ago the conductor of the Falls train and several of the passengers saw two young lions playing between the rails near the Gwaai.

Further up the line, in the direction of the Zambesi, the lions appear to be much more numerous. Not long since the native commissioner at Matetsi is reported to have had fifteen head of live stock killed in broad daylight by nine lions which were hunting together.

Quite lately two or three lions have been seen close to the Victoria Falls, on the south side of the river, but, for the reassurance of visitors, it may be mentioned that they only appeared at night and were exceedingly shy of any human being.

At Dett, which is on the same line of railway, a few weeks ago the remains were found of a white man who could not be identified and who appeared to have been killed and partly eaten by lions.

Another European when accosted for travelling without a ticket hastily left the train in the same district, made off in the darkness and has not been seen since. All of which shows that there is plenty of work awaiting the sportsman, even in southern Rhodesia.

Big Flight of Wild Ducks.

From the Kansas City Star.

"Passengers on a Milwaukee train from Chicago, coming into Kansas City this morning, were surprised to see hundreds of wild ducks flying northward," said C. R. Williams of Chicago.

"The air was almost darkened by their flight in places north of Kansas City."

STRIPED GRUNTS KISSING.

An Exhibition That Pleased Little Plume, Chief of the Montana Blackfeet.

In one of the tanks at the Aquarium is a lot of striped grunts, handsome little fishes from Bermuda, which do one thing that is peculiar and different from anything done by other fishes in the Aquarium.

If the outside of the glass front of the tank is stroked softly and repeatedly downward with the finger tips, the pretty fishes will come swimming toward it, opening wide their mouths, which are within of a beautiful red.

When near the glass two of them, each with its mouth wide open, will approach each other and gently lock jaws in an attitude of kissing. Sometimes when the glass has been stroked as many as four pairs of the striped grunt have gone through this performance at once.

Why the striped grunts do this nobody knows. It may be due to some sort of hypnotic influence exercised by the moving finger tips; but men experienced in the care of fishes in captivity have observed that all the species of the grunt family do the same thing in like circumstances.

Little Plume, chief of the Blackfoot Indians of Montana, in company with another Indian chief and an interpreter, visited the Aquarium one day last week and viewed all the other exhibits with interest, though with all of the Indian's traditional immobility. But at the exhibition given by the kissing striped grunts Little Plume laughed outright.